

## **Immunization Registry Progress in Georgia**

### **Immunization Coverage in Georgia**

According to National Immunization Survey (NIS) data for July 1997 to June 1998, the percentage of children 19-35 months of age who were up-to-date with 4 doses of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, 3 doses of poliomyelitis, and 1 dose of measles, mumps, rubella vaccine was 81%.

### **Unique qualities about the Georgia Registry of Immunization Transactions and Services (GRITS):**

- The development of GRITS, under the guidance of a consulting firm, has followed a strategy that emphasizes the importance of involving both public and private providers in the design and development of the registry from the beginning and throughout the implementation process. Effective communication with all providers, as well as parents and the community, has been the key to ensuring a successful registry. Our mantra is “ALL KIDS, ALL SHOTS, ALL PROVIDERS”.
- Community meetings were held statewide from October 1998 to January 1999 to present the proposed implementation plan for GRITS. Feedback from these sessions was utilized to complete an implementation template. This approach will promote standardization while allowing for unique needs of communities to be met. The rollout plan of GRITS will tap into existing collaborations within the state, and utilize an Immunization Council, co-led by public and private providers.
- Seven work groups consisting of doctors, nurses, and office managers from the public and private sector, as well as representatives from hospitals, managed care, and schools, have been actively defining the working functions of the registry to ensure that it is efficient and effective.
- These grass roots and collaborative efforts will help to encourage provider participation and promote acceptance of the registry to parents and the community.

### **Other registry plans, accomplishments, and successes:**

In 1997, Savannah's registry was the first All Kids Count I Registry to be fully operational. It continues to link all public and 98% of private providers to a common database and will interface with the state registry.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for development of the Registry was produced in 1999 and released on January 21, 2000. Vendor proposals are currently being evaluated and a vendor will be chosen in the spring of 2000.

### **Some challenges and barriers affecting registry progress:**

Different agencies' cultures and priorities have impeded the collaborative registry development efforts.

### **Current political or legislative factors affecting registry activity:**

- Legislation was passed in 1996 mandating a state immunization registry thanks to the joint support of the Georgia Academy of Pediatrics, the Georgia Academy of Family Physicians, and the Division of Public Health.

- During the 2000 State of Georgia Legislative Session, some funds were successfully appropriated to fund the provisions of the Immunization Registry Law (Official Code of Georgia Annotated, 31-12-3.1) in the Fiscal Year 2001 budget. The Registry Law will then become effective in January 2001, six months after fund appropriation.

**Current registry funding:**

GRITS is funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Immunization Program. Effective Fiscal Year 2001, State funds will be needed for ongoing maintenance and support.

**Helpful immunization and immunization registry contacts in Georgia:**

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Immunize Georgia's Little Guys - a statewide immunization coalition managed by Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

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